

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 MANAMA 00244 081543Z

73

ACTION PM-04

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 EB-07 MC-02 ACDA-05 /058 W

----- 043516

P R 081350Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA BAHRAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY 2838

INFO AMEMBASSY KUWAIT KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY JIDDA SAUDI ARABIA

SECDEF WASHINGTON DC

CHUSMTM SAUDI ARABIA

COMIDEASTFOR

S E C R E T MANAMA 0244 SECTION 1 OF 2

E.O. 11652 : GDS

TAGS : MASS, BA

SUBJECT : BAHRAINI INFORMAL REQUEST FOR HELICOPTER

FORCE SURVEY

SUMMARY: BAHRAIN'S CROWN PRINCE/DEFENSE MINISTER HAS ASKED THAT USG FOLLOW FRENCH AND BRITISH BY SENDING SURVEY TEAM TO BAHRAIN TO RECOMMEND AN INTEGRATED EQUIPMENT/TRAINING/MAINTENANCE PACKAGE FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF HELICOPTER WING IN BDF. EMBASSY RECOMMENDS STRONGLY THAT USG BE PREPARED TO RESPOND FAVORABLY TO THIS REQUEST SHOULD IT BE FORMALIZED BY GOB. CROWN PRINCE WOULD HOPE FOR ARRIVAL OF SUCH A SURVEY TEAM NOT LATER THAN APRIL AND HAS SUGGESTED THAT THREE OFFICERS (ARMY, NAVY, AIR FORCE) FROM U.S. MILITARY GROUPS IN SAUDI ARABIA OR KUWAIT SPENDING SEVERAL DAYS IN BAHRAIN WOULD BE ADEQUATE FOR BDF PURPOSES. END SUMMARY

1. MARCH 6 I MADE OFTEN POSTPONED CALL ON BAHRAIN'S MUCH TRAVELED CROWN PRINCE/DEFENSE MINISTER AND DEFENSE FORCE COMMANDER, SHAIKH HAMAD BIN ISA. AS DEPARTMENT AWARE, WHILE EMBASSY RELATIONS WITH SHAIKH HAMAD AND THE BDF ARE CORDIAL, THEY ARE DELICATE SINCE HE PERCEIVES EMBASSY AND USG SHARE THE AMIR'S AND GOVERNMENT'S LACK OF ENTHUSIASM FOR AN OPEN-
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 MANAMA 00244 081543Z

ENDED BUILDUP OF BDF. OVER LAST TWO YEARS WE HAVE HAD TO

TRY INFORMALLY TO DIVERT THE INTEREST OF THE CROWN PRINCE AND HIS SOLDIERING YOUNG AL KHALIFA COUSINS FROM SUCH ITEMS AS HAWK, TOW AND REDEYE.

2. FOCAL POINT MARCH 6 DISCUSSION WAS SHAIKH HAMAD'S REQUEST FOR USG ASSISTANCE IN DEVELOPMENT OF BDF "AIR WING" WHICH HE VISUALIZES AS SOME FIFTEEN HELICOPTERS EVENTUALLY SUPPORTED BY SEVERAL LIGHT FIXED-WING RECONNAISSANCE AIRCRAFT. ACCORDING TO SHAIKH HAMAD, MISSION OF "AIR WING" WOULD INCLUDE RECONNAISSANCE AND SEARCH AND RESCUE, TRANSPORT OF "SPECIAL FORCES" AND CAPABILITY FOR COMBAT GROUND SUPPORT. CROWN PRINCE PICTURES SUCH A FORCE AS HAVING SUFFICIENT ARMAMENT TO ENGAGE INVADING SMALL CRAFT AT SEA AND INVADING TANKS ASHORE.

3. SHAIKH HAMAD TOLD ME BOTH THE FRENCH AND BRITISH WILL BE SENDING MILITARY/INDUSTRY SURVEY TEAMS TO BAHRAIN THIS MONTH AND HAVE PROMISED TO COME FORWARD WITH AN INTEGRATED PACKAGE OF PROPOSED EQUIPMENT, TRAINING AND MAINTENANCE. HE WOULD NOT LIKE USG, "BAHRAIN'S BEST AND STRONGEST FRIEND", TO FEEL LEFT OUT AND HENCE IS INVITING US TO PARTICIPATE ALSO.

(COMMENT: AS DEPARTMENT AND DOD AWARE, WE HAVE ALREADY MADE COMMITMENT IN PRINCIPLE TO PROVIDE CONUS TRAINING FOR BDF HELICOPTER PILOTS WHO WOULD MAN THIS "AIR WING". END COMMENT) AFTER A GOOD BIT OF GRUMBLING ABOUT THE INDIFFERENT ATTITUDE OF USG TO ARMING BDF, AS OPPOSED TO U.S. "RESPONSIVENESS" TO SAUDI, KUWAITI AND UAE MILITARY MODERNIZATION PLAN, SHAIKH HAMAD EXPRESSED STRONG PREFERENCE FOR U.S. PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT OF "AIR WING". HE ALSO SOUGHT TO ASSURE ME THAT IF USG COULD NOT RESPOND TO THIS REQUEST, BDF WOULD TURN ONLY TO OUR "ALLIES", THE FRENCH AND BRITISH. I ASSURED CROWN PRINCE THAT A FRENCH OR BRITISH ROLE IN DEVELOPMENT OF "AIR WING" WOULD CAUSE US NO ANXIETY FROM POLITICAL STANDPOINT, ALTHOUGH WE APPRECIATED THE OPPORTUNITY TO COMPETE COMMERCIALLY FOR THE SALE OF SUCH HELICOPTER EQUIPMENT, TRAINING AND MAINTENANCE AS MIGHT BE CONSISTENT WITH OVERALL U.S. POLICY IN THE AREA.

4. AS SHAIKH HAMAD ELABORATED ON BDF'S PLANS, IT APPEARED HE IS SEEKING ARRANGEMENT IN WHICH U.S. WOULD ENTER FMS SALES
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 MANAMA 00244 081543Z

CASE WITH GOB FOR A TOTALLY INTEGRATED HELICOPTER PROGRAM. WITHIN SALES CASE PRIVATE MANUFACTURES WOULD PRESUMABLY PROVIDE HELICOPTERS, USG AND/OR PRIVATE MANUFACTURERS WOULD PROVIDE CONUS TRAINING, USG WOULD PROVIDE ARMAMENT, AND PRIVATE AMERICAN CONTRACTOR WOULD PROVIDE MAINTENANCE, OPERATIONAL TRAINING AND MAINTENANCE TRAINING IN BAHRAIN UNDER GENERAL SUPERVISION OF DOD LIAISON OFFICER RESPONSIBLE FOR OVERALL SALES CASE. SHAIKH HAMAD EXPRESSED HOPE THAT THE PRIVATE

FIRM WHICH HANDLED MAINTENANCE SUPPORT AND TRAINING FOR BDF HELICOPTER WING WOULD ALSO DEVELOP ON COMMERCIAL BASIS A REGIONAL HELICOPTER MAINTENANCE FACILITY IN BAHRAIN AND PERHAPS EVEN EXPAND ITS ACTIVITIES TO HELICOPTER ASSEMBLAGE AND POSSIBLY MANUFACTURE OF CERTAIN PARTS. SHAIKH HAMAD SAID HE HAD DISCUSSED THIS POSSIBILITY WITH FRENCH, WOULD WELCOME AMERICAN INTEREST, AND COULD ASSURE FULLEST GOB SUPPORT FOR A PRIVATE HELICOPTER MANUFACTURER SEEKING TO PARTICIPATE IN BAHRAIN'S ROLE AS A REGIONAL SERVICE AND DISTRIBUTION CENTER.

5. SHAIKH HAMAD SAID THAT IF USG WERE TO PARTICIPATE IN DEVELOPMENT OF BDF "AIR WING", IT WOULD BE ESSENTIAL FOR A USG SURVEY TEAM TO VISIT BAHRAIN NOT LATER THAN END OF APRIL SINCE FRENCH AND BRITISH WILL BE COMING THIS MONTH AND BDF FEELS URGENCY IN PUSHING AHEAD WITH ITS PLAN. HE SPECIFICALLY STATED THAT THREE U.S. MILITARY OFFICERS REPRESENTING EACH OF THE SERVICES WOULD BE SUFFICIENT TO BDF'S NEED AND THAT SEVERAL DAYS IN BAHRAIN SHOULD BE ALL THAT THE SURVEY WOULD REQUIRE. HE ASKED IF THERE WERE NOT U.S. MILITARY OFFICERS IN USMTM SAUDI ARABIA OR ENGAGED IN FMS ACTIVITIES IN KUWAIT QUALIFIED TO UNDERTAKE SURVEY WHO COULD BE MADE AVAILABLE.

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY TRAINING, MILITARY BUILDUP, MILITARY PERSONNEL, ARMED FORCES, MILITARY ASSISTANCE, HELICOPTERS, SURVEYS, MILITARY VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 MAR 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ellisob
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976MANAMA00244
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: FULL TEXT ON MICROFILM
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: P760054-0563, D760088-0156
From: MANAMA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760385/aaaacwpy.tel
Line Count: 137
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION PM
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ellisob
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags: ANOMALY
Review Date: 03 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03 JUN 2004 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <18 OCT 2004 by ellisob>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BAHRAIN INFORMAL REQUEST FOR HELICOPTER FORCE SURVEYS
TAGS: MASS, BA, US, (SHAIKH HAMAD BIN ISA)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006